

# **Design Guidelines Manual**

## **Downtown Northampton Central Business District**

Northampton, Massachusetts  
April 8, 1999



This manual provides designers a set of guidelines to ensure that building rehabilitation and new construction contribute to downtown Northampton's pedestrian-scale, historical, and architectural character. For many projects, there may be alternative designs that would contribute to the downtown's character. This document contains guidelines only.

Any applicable regulations, including exemptions and legal standards, should be obtained and reviewed prior to any construction in the central business district. Applicable regulations are available at the Northampton Office of Planning and Development, Forbes and Lilly Libraries, and on the internet at [city.northampton.ma.us](http://city.northampton.ma.us).

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April 8, 1999

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This document contains guidelines only. Any applicable regulations should be obtained at the City of Northampton Office of Planning and Development, and reviewed prior to any construction in the downtown district.

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## **I. Introduction**

### *Purposes of The Design Guidelines Manual*

Present day Northampton enjoys a social, cultural, and economic vitality rare among American towns and small cities, in no small way due to its downtown's outstanding and irreplaceable architectural heritage. While the downtown has been blessed in recent years with some exemplary new buildings which compliment the existing architecture, and with restoration and renovation projects which preserve and enhance historic buildings, there are also examples of incompatible and damaging new development, remodeling, and additions. No regulatory means currently are in effect by which the city can protect its downtown character from such degradation. There is no guarantee that new development or future alterations of existing historic buildings will respect and enhance the downtown built environment. It is the primary intention of this manual to help protect and reinforce the architectural heritage, inviting character, and economic viability of the downtown.

The manual includes guidelines for the rehabilitation and protection of historic buildings as well as for new construction. The manual is meant to serve as a helpful aid for design and review of these downtown projects. The guidelines it contains represent timeless design principles derived from an analysis of Northampton's historic buildings and streetscapes--principles which are still suitable for today's building and commercial needs.

The physical character of downtown Northampton is largely defined by the continuity of historic multi-story commercial buildings built at the sidewalk's edge. This thematic backbone makes the downtown streets linear rooms of walkable public space linking a large variety of businesses and public amenities. This pattern is instrumental to the city's strong community identity, and to the notably vibrant downtown retail economy which draws customers from far beyond Northampton. A particular aim of the guidelines is to reinforce the downtown's pedestrian-friendly character by protecting and augmenting the stock of quality thematic, multilevel buildings with storefronts.

### *Downtown Northampton's Historic Character*

#### **Background: The Architectural Legacy of a Vital Community**

Residents of Northampton have long been conscious that the city's importance to the region is greater than its size would suggest, perhaps since its beginnings in the 17th century, but certainly from its development into an institutional and commercial center in the 19th century. As a home to scholars, Abolitionists, artists, suffragists, a President of the United States, the inventor of the Graham cracker and others, Northampton has been one of western Massachusetts' most important social and intellectual centers.

One of the ways we know this consciousness or civic pride has existed is its expression through architecture: the way in which the city's architecture has been created, maintained and preserved. There have been lapses in judgment, to be sure, and times when razing whole blocks of the downtown seemed both progressive and inevitable. But whether by reason of collective wisdom or of uncooperative economics, the lapses were minimal and what we have today in the Northampton downtown district is an extraordinarily fine collection of 19th and 20th century residential, institutional and commercial buildings which continues to assert the city's significance.

### **The Serendipitous Effect of Plan and Topography on Character**

Northampton's downtown district has a definable character shaped by its street layout and topography as well as by its architecture. Buildings follow an irregular street layout that evolved in the expansion west of both houses and stores from Market Street during the late 18th and 19th centuries. While Main Street, a relatively flat thoroughfare through the district, was the primary commercial street, buildings also went up on the slopes of side streets which curved and bent to follow the hills or simply the logic of their early uses. Much of the character of the district is a result of this irregular plan and uneven topography. The row of buildings from 202-204 Main street curves and descends to follow those of 2-8 and 12-24 Crafts Avenue, others keep to the high ground above Old South Street. The Columbia Building at Main and Old South Streets makes its corner in a curve to follow its sloping lot; the Rust, Pierce and Wright Blocks on Main Street between Cracker Barrel Alley and Masonic Street neatly conform to its bend.

For the pedestrian, the plan and topography of the district make it far more interesting than a grid, with its secondary walks and connections to be discovered in a Button Street, a walkway between Gothic and King Streets, or a narrow set of stairs to Main Street beside the First Congregational Church; a passage between buildings on Main Street, Cracker Barrel Alley, that dips down to mural-decorated parking spaces and an unexpected residential building. Small shops open in exposed basements on sloping Old South Street buildings, and basements become useable shop space on Main Street. Clearly, the element of surprise created by the landscape contributes to the district's character.

### **Residential Buildings and the Picturesque Architecture of the 19th Century**

The mixture of building types and styles contributes to this character as well. Off Main Street, residential buildings, dating mainly after 1850, are Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Mansard and Colonial Revival in style. Most have kept their residential appearance even when they are in commercial use. Their smaller scale and domestic origins contribute to the district a neighborhood feeling, enhanced by the visual pleasure of their architectural detailing on brackets, turned porch posts, worn clapboards, fine window muntins and decorative brickwork.

They make an important historical contribution, as well, by documenting the development of the city as it progressed from a rural residential area to a commercial/residential center during the second half of the 19th century. Good examples of these residential buildings are the two designed by Northampton architect William Fenno Pratt: the Greek Revival style James House, at 42 Gothic Street that dates ca. 1850, and the 1866 Italianate style, Catholic parsonage at 71 King Street. Not only do they document the work of architect Fenno, but they are part of Northampton's commercial and social history, and continue to satisfy our eyes.

Two rows of multifamily houses from the 1890s in the Queen Anne style, the Cook Block, at 34 New South Street, and the workers housing at 30-42 Hampton Avenue, reflect the city's growing population and again temper the district's monumentality with their frame construction and domestic Queen Anne detail. Other houses have fared less well, having been altered over time, built around, had fenestration and entries closed and opened, and their exteriors sided, but nevertheless contribute their historic presence to the district. The house at 40 Center Street has lost its original entry and had a bay window unit installed on its street facade, but its flush-boarded pediment and broad corner pilasters continue to convey much of its Greek Revival origins. Three houses on Center

Court that have seen many alterations date between ca. 1840 and 1855 and remain from the city's 19th century residential street pattern of seemingly haphazard cart lanes and semi-rural lot development.

### **Institutional Buildings from Romantic Victorian to 20th Century Revivals**

The city's pride is clearly expressed in its institutional buildings, both civic and cultural. These institutional buildings are key elements of the downtown district's character. They establish its high architectural standards and represent some of the best of the Gothic Revival, High Victorian Gothic, Romanesque Revival, and Classical Revival styles. Most, if not all, are architect-designed, and carefully-considered siting often enhances their impact on the streetscape. They are detached, often rise above the majority of the district's buildings in height, are frequently set on rises, may provide a terminus to a street vista, occupy corner lots with stylistically developed street facades, or may be set back from the street line to distinguish them from commercial neighbors.

William Fenno Pratt's Gothic Revival City Hall of 1849 is probably the most idiosyncratic and imaginative. His Smith Charities Building of 1865 is a landmark in an historically accurate Renaissance Revival style. Memorial Hall, designed by James McLaughlin in 1872, brings a mansard roof and the large proportions of the French Second Empire to Main Street.

Peabody and Stearns, prominent Boston architects, designed the First Congregational Church of 1877-78 in the High Victorian Gothic style, followed by Henry F. Kilburn's Richardsonian Romanesque designs for the Hampshire County Courthouse of 1884-1886.

William Brocklesby, architect, was responsible for designing the Classical Revival style Academy of Music in 1891 that contrasts in scale with the Classical Revival D. A. Sullivan School on the opposite corner. The Sullivan School was constructed in 1896 by Gardner, Pynne and Gardner, architects of Springfield.

Not all the institutions are found on Main Street. The Home Culture Club or People's Institute on Gothic Street in the Colonial Revival style of 1904 and the BPOE Hall, a Classical Revival building of 1914 on Center Street are both substantial buildings architecturally. On or off Main Street, all these institutional buildings have been locations of defining events in the social, cultural and civic history of the city.

### **Commercial Buildings from 19th Century Revivals to American Movement Styles**

Commercial buildings in groups, rows or pairs, collectively form the architectural equivalent of the backbone of the downtown district. Within their overall consistency of masonry construction, plan and elevation, scale and proportion, they show a remarkable amount of variety and detail, so that monotony is avoided, and a consistently high level of craftsmanship is demonstrated. Much of the variety occurs at the ground floor level, but the 19th century's segmentally arched windows, multi-paned sash, ornamental lintels, sills, brickwork and occasional pressed metal cornices have been retained on the upper stories, and offer considerable variety as well.

Northampton's downtown commercial buildings encompass more than a century of construction, dating from ca. 1820, and represent an unusually complete history of the technology of commercial construction. The Isaac Damon granite stores (ca. 1826-28) at 108-112 Main Street were built using the post-and-beam construction technique followed since the country's settlement, but was transposed from wood into granite in the early 19th century for commercial buildings.

It may have been William Fenno Pratt who brought the next commercial building innovation to town, the cast iron facade, when he remodeled the first Northampton National Bank in 1866. Masonry, load-bearing construction - sometimes with cast iron storefronts - prevailed for the majority of the district's commercial buildings, until steel frame construction appeared, as represented by the Calvin Theater at 19-26 King Street, ca. 1900 or the second Northampton National Bank, 132-134 Main Street, of 1913.

It would be difficult to find another city whose commercial district was as single-handedly shaped stylistically by one architect as Northampton's was by William Fenno Pratt. Fortunately, he was versatile, creative and au courant: his architectural work set a high standard for others to follow. Pratt's commercial buildings are largely Italianate in style and are distinctive for their pendant-shaped, corbeled brick cornices, for the regularity of their pedimented or segmentally arched window lintels, and for their use of a locally made, deep red brick.

With new construction came a series of styles that continued into the 20th century. The Beaux Arts-derived classical revival is represented by architect J. M. Miner's 1871 Fitch Brothers Block at 179-181 Main Street. The prominent central metal cornice has a broken pediment and building corners have brick quoins, both of which are references to classical forms in commercial terms. Fire in 1870 gave Pratt and a series of other architects an opportunity to reconstruct a number of buildings along Main Street, and prosperity allowed them to extend construction along the side streets.

In 1911, Karl Scott Putnam updated the Classical Revival in the IOOF block, 24-28 Center Street, a brick block with quoins and a Chicago School-influenced broad cornice. Classicism took a more academic and imposing form in the Northampton National Bank, 132-134 Main Street, 1913, with its colossal, engaged, and fluted columns. In 1916, Thomas M. James from Boston introduced to Main Street the dignified Renaissance Revival with his brick and sandstone building at number 109.

At 1 King Street J. Williams Beals and Sons took into account the raking light of a north east corner site, and designed in 1928 the Art Deco Pioneer National Bank with its smooth surface and incised ornament. The Hotel Northampton at 36 King Street, a Neo-colonial style building of 1927 designed by the architectural firm of H. L. Stevens Company in New York is the largest single building in the district, yet its bulk is broken up with an angled facade and southern colonial-inspired portico.

At the opposite extreme of scale, but contributing to the city's commercial character nonetheless, is the Miss Northampton Diner, 8 Strong Avenue, ca. 1924. Stylistically the diner brings us into the Art Moderne era with its stylistic allusions to mobility and although unintentional, its setting beside the railroad is quite appropriate, since diner design grew out of the compact railroad cars of the 19th century.

Threaded through these widely varied styles is the Victorian era's interest in picturesque effects and interesting interior volumes. The bays, towers, and oriels, pressed tin cornices favored by the period's designers show up in Northampton's commercial buildings from 1850 to about 1910. In particular, corner buildings offered an opportunity to incorporate those features. The Cook Block, at 29 Pleasant Street, took up the challenge in 1895 and used both a bay and a corner tower in its elevations. Benjamin Seabury designed fanciful metal bays for the Dewey-Hammond block 33-41 Main Street of 1896, and the same year Curtis Page designed an ornate metal oriel for the Hampton Hotel at 79-83 Pleasant Street. The most extensively picturesque composition is found at the railroad depot, whose conical tower, rusticated stonework and widely overhanging eaves achieve the era's desired romantic appearance.

No matter what the overall style of the building, commercial storefronts, more often than not, follow one of several traditional configurations. Most common



is a center, recessed entry flanked by glass storefronts seen, for instance, at 51 State Street. For narrower lots, a slightly recessed entry adjacent to a single glass storefront is used, as at 14 Masonic Street. For corner sites, an angled corner entry behind its supporting post with storefronts on each street facade is the most traditional arrangement.

These traditional storefront systems, of both metal and wood framework, follow the street line, are set on paneled bases, and may incorporate high glass transoms as in the 1895-1915 building at 38-42 Pleasant Street, or 23 Main Street, which has leaded glass transoms.

#### **Industrial Buildings and the Character of Vernacular Architecture**

Included in the commercial category are several former industrial buildings that add their distinctive shapes to the streetscapes. The earliest of these is the gas works roundhouse at 244 Main Street which dates from 1856, one of only three such buildings remaining in Massachusetts. Together with its partner, the asymmetrically roofed gas plant, the roundhouse exemplifies the happy convergence of history and architecture that characterizes much of the district. A second industrial building, the ca. 1865 Hayden Foundry and Machine Company at 196 Pleasant Street manages to stand out in its mixed commercial neighborhood by virtue of its singular elevation and jerkin head roof. A more standard industrial elevation repeated in mill towns throughout the commonwealth - a low, front-gabled roof above multiple stories of segmentally arched windows - is found at the E.N. Foote Button Shop, 32 Masonic Street, built ca. 1880. The varied and purposeful history that these few industrial buildings convey adds a full dimension to the district's character.

## II. Definitions

### *What is a Historic Building?*

For the purposes of this manual, a "historic" building is hereby defined as a building, or portion thereof, constructed prior to 1945 that retains significant original features which are either presently visible or which may be made visible through rehabilitation efforts.

### *Definitions of Building Types*

Buildings in Northampton's downtown district can be grouped into four general types. These building types, as defined below, will be referred to throughout this manual.

#### 1. Theme Buildings



"Theme" buildings are typically Victorian period, 2-5 story masonry commercial buildings with no front or side setbacks, highly glazed first floor storefronts, rhythmic arrangements of vertical upper story windows, decorative cornices, and other historically appropriate articulation and detailing.

## 2. Landmark Buildings



Landmark" buildings are architecturally distinctive, usually free-standing buildings, with significant property setbacks and landscaped spaces on one or more sides. Often, they display distinctive, visible roofs or roof features. They were frequently built (and are still often used for) civic, religious, or cultural purposes. This category also includes some high quality historic residential buildings.

### 3. Transitional Residential Buildings



"Transitional residential" buildings are those within the district which were originally constructed as residences, and continue to display features typical of residences, although many have been converted to commercial use. Such buildings are usually of wood frame construction, have front and side yard setbacks, and retain original stylistic features or proportions.



#### 4. Anomaly Buildings



"Anomaly" buildings are those which do not fit into any of the three prior categories, and in many instances do not "fit" stylistically or visually in the fabric created by the other three building types. They are usually modern (post-1945) one-story buildings. Others are "trademark" buildings (those of a design unique to a particular franchise business), or are multi-story buildings with features, scale, massing, or materials which are not compatible with the character of downtown Northampton. However, some anomaly buildings are early 20th century single story structures with historic or visual value. Still others are those which--if designed more appropriately--might otherwise be considered landmark buildings because of their civic or religious use, cultural prominence, or siting.

### III. Applicability

#### *Demolition of Historic Buildings*

Demolition of historic buildings (those built prior to 1945) should be considered only after all reasonable alternatives--especially rehabilitation--have been fully considered. For historic landmark or theme buildings, demolition should be considered only when the building is unusable or is functionally and structurally obsolete, and when an appropriate new building has been designed to replace it. Demolition of historic transitional residential or historic anomaly buildings should be considered only when the building is unusable or is functionally and structurally obsolete, and when an appropriate new building has been designed to replace it; however, an approved new theme building may replace a transitional residential building regardless of its condition.

#### *Alterations to and Renovations of Historic Buildings*

Alterations to and renovations of historic buildings should incorporate measures to protect and preserve historic character and features. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, outlined in appendix II, provides helpful reference guidelines for historic rehabilitation.

#### *Alterations to non-Historic Buildings*

Alterations to non-historic buildings that nevertheless display architecturally significant design features should be made in ways which are stylistically compatible with the existing building.

Alterations to anomaly buildings should be directed towards making such buildings more consistent with "theme" buildings, in accordance with guideline no. 3 of the following section in this manual.

#### *New Buildings*

A new building's architectural character should respect the existing historic character of adjacent buildings and of the downtown as a whole. Its character should be consistently developed throughout its design, articulation and detailing. By closely following the design guidelines presented in this manual, a building should result which blends compatibly into the downtown architectural fabric.

It is one of the purposes of this manual to encourage the creation of "theme" buildings in new construction for the downtown district. Achieving and maintaining a critical mass of theme buildings is key to retaining and enhancing the well defined street spaces which give the downtown its distinctive, coherent character. Construction of new theme buildings is appropriate for most building sites in the downtown district.

Because of the importance of maintaining and creating a critical mass of "theme" buildings on downtown streets, construction of new landmark buildings is discouraged for any locations where they would interrupt the continuity of existing theme buildings, or in areas dominated by historic residences. Historic transitional residential buildings provide character, variety, and historic significance to the downtown. New buildings of this type are appropriate for sites already dominated by these buildings, but are not appropriate elsewhere in the district. Renovations and additions to existing historic residences should be compatible with the historic styles and features of those buildings. Nothing in this paragraph should be interpreted as discouraging new theme commercial buildings within clusters of transitional residential buildings.

"Anomaly" and "trademark" buildings are incompatible with the historic, vital character of downtown Northampton.

#### *Downtown District Boundaries*

The Downtown District to which this manual applies shall coincide with the Central Business Zoning District (CB), and shall change to coincide with any future CB district changes. Current boundaries are indicated by the insert map.

#### *Distribution of Building Types*

Approximately 85 theme commercial buildings line major downtown streets, and comprise 43% of all buildings. Approximately 29 landmark buildings are sited prominently on important streets, and comprise 15% of all buildings. Approximately 35 transitional residential buildings occur mostly in small traditional groupings along side streets, and comprise 18% of all buildings. 47 anomaly buildings are randomly distributed throughout the district, and comprise 24% of all buildings. See insert map for distribution patterns of buildings in the district.

## **IV. Design Guidelines**

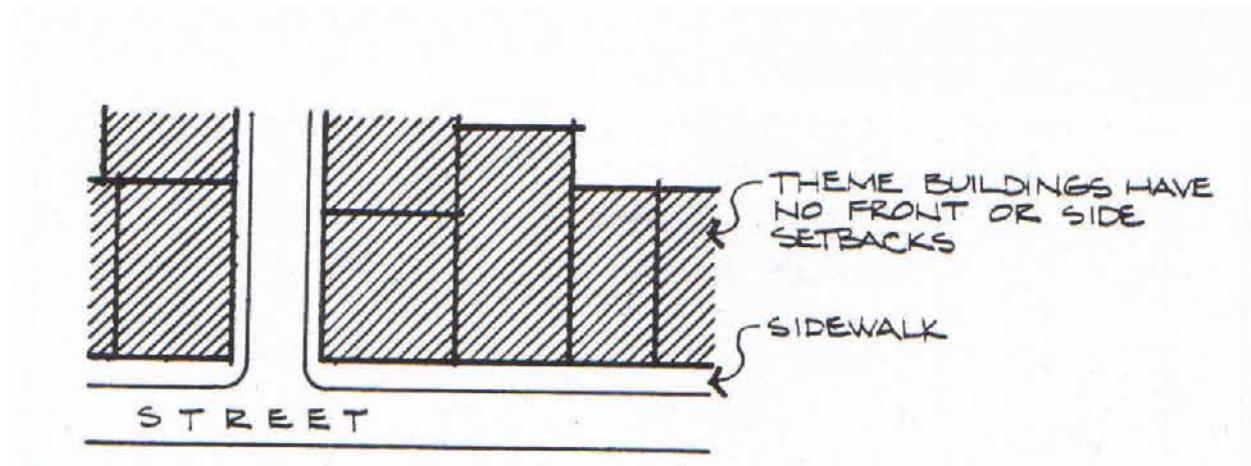
All photographs reproduced in this section were taken in Northampton's downtown district during January, 1999. They are meant to provide readers with familiar examples of both desirable and undesirable aspects of design and construction. Illustrated conditions which are represented as undesirable in this manual ("not this") have often resulted for good reasons in the past. Their inclusion here is meant only to help identify design attributes for present and future construction. In no way should the reader associate an illustrated undesirable building condition with the building as a whole, or with any owner or tenant who now occupies the building.

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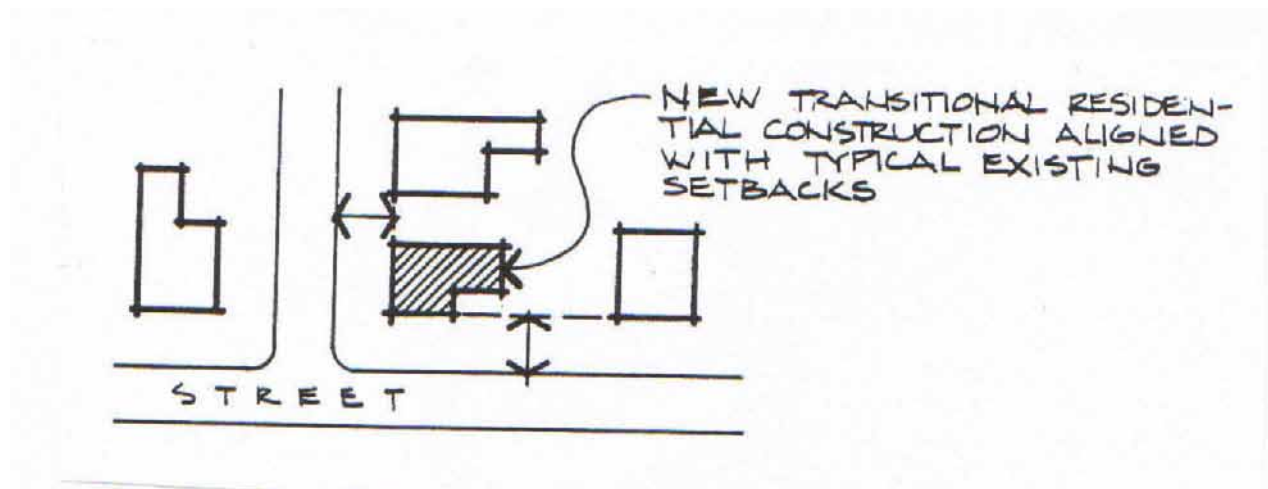


### Guideline 1: Building Setbacks

- Existing building setbacks for historic buildings should be preserved on all street sides, and on all sides containing park or public gathering spaces.
- For theme commercial buildings, there should be no front or side building setbacks except when necessary to preserve high quality views or to create quality public spaces.



- For landmark buildings, setbacks may vary depending on the need to preserve high quality views or to create quality public spaces.
- For transitional residential buildings, setbacks should align with typical existing setbacks in the neighborhood.



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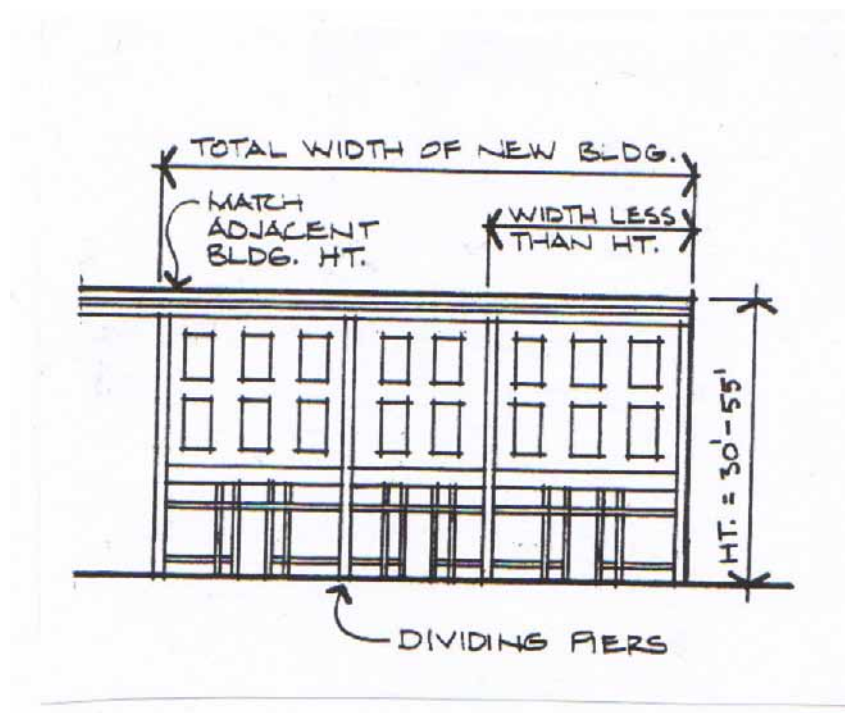


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## Guideline 2: Building Height & Width

- The existing height and width of a historic facade should be preserved.
- New theme buildings should be at least 30' and two stories high to any street, but not more than 55' tall. Street facade fenestration should be designed to appear to be at least 2 stories high, even if a building has only one interior story.
- New theme building facade heights should generally approximate those of adjacent buildings where feasible.
- New theme buildings which are wider than tall should be visually divided on street facades into one or more divisions, each taller than wide. Divisions should be defined by piers built into the facade at least 12" wide and 4" deep, or of equivalent separation, on street facades.





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### *Guideline 3: Renovations to Anomaly Buildings*

- Historic anomaly buildings, including single-story early 20th century commercial buildings, should be renovated so as to retain historic features, such as original storefront elements and facade detailing.
- Renovations to existing anomaly buildings should normally follow all guidelines which tend to convert their character into that of theme buildings (see definition), unless such guidelines would be clearly incompatible with the character of existing features of the building which are to be retained.
- Renovations to existing one-story anomaly buildings should add additional stories when feasible, in ways which are compatible with existing features that are to be retained. If such added stories are not feasible, renovations should incorporate a visually compatible raised front parapet wall which is at least 4' above the front roof eave height, and is at least 16" thick.

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NOT THIS:



#### *Guideline 4: Buildings on Corner Lots*

- Existing historic features present on corner buildings should be preserved. These may include towers, rounded masonry corners, or angled corner entrances with corner support columns.
- All buildings on corner lots should present high quality and architecturally related front facades to both streets, in accordance with all other guidelines herein described. If one street is more heavily used, then the facade of a new or renovated building facing that street may be more highly articulated and/or detailed than the facade which faces the side street.
- A new or renovated theme or anomaly building on a corner lot should have highly glazed first floor facades with recessed entrances on both streets, in accordance with guideline #7, or, a traditional angled corner entrance with a corner support column, and additional entrances for any facade walls that are more than 30' wide.

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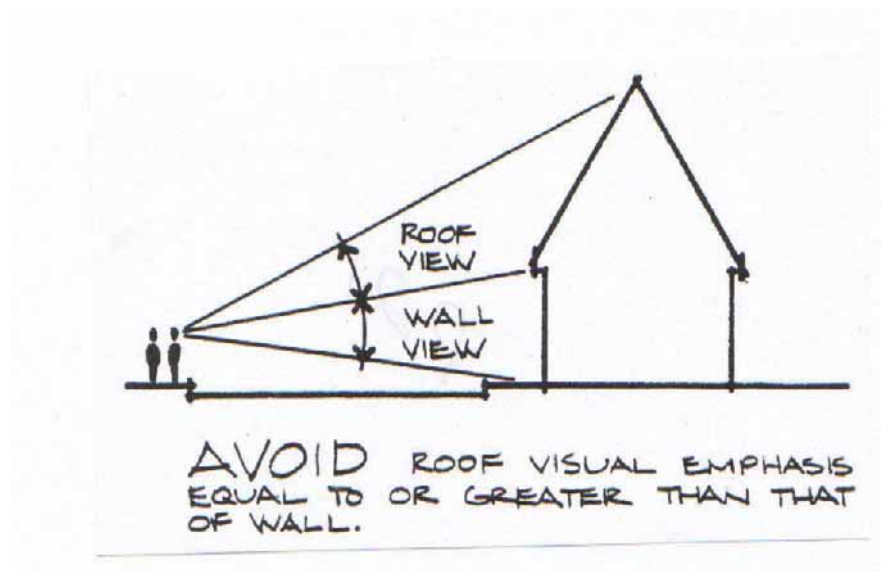
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### Guideline 5: Roofs

- Traditional roof features of historic buildings should be preserved where visible. These include roof style and pitch, historically authentic materials in good repair, overhang proportions and details, and corbeled masonry or pressed metal cornices.
- Roofs for new theme buildings should not usually be visible from streets, and should normally be screened by raised parapet walls with decorative cornices. Mansard roofs which encompass the top floor may be used for theme buildings of at least 3 stories.
- Roofs for new landmark or transitional residential buildings, or for additions thereto, should be traditional configurations of gables (between 8:12 and 12:12 pitch), hips, mansards, gambrels or sheds in keeping with the general style of the building.
- For any building, visible roofs should not rival or exceed walls in their respective visible proportions from street views.



- Roofing materials which are significantly visible from streets should be traditional materials such as slate, metal, tile, or reasonable facsimiles thereof, used in appropriate traditional combinations.

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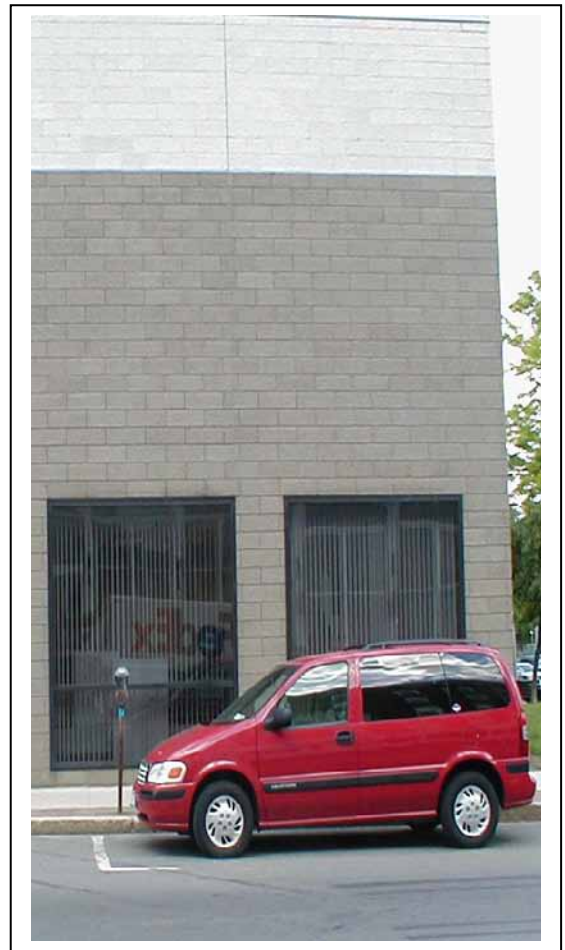
### *Guideline 6: Building Articulation*

- Historic building features which articulate the form of a building's facade should be preserved when present. Such features include bays, turrets, oriels, columns, roof pediments, dormers, large arched openings, etc.
- New buildings or additions may be articulated by means of bays, turrets, recesses, columns, large arched openings, etc., designed in a stylistically consistent manner. Such articulations should be designed to be compatible with other downtown historic buildings, especially those which are adjacent or nearby.

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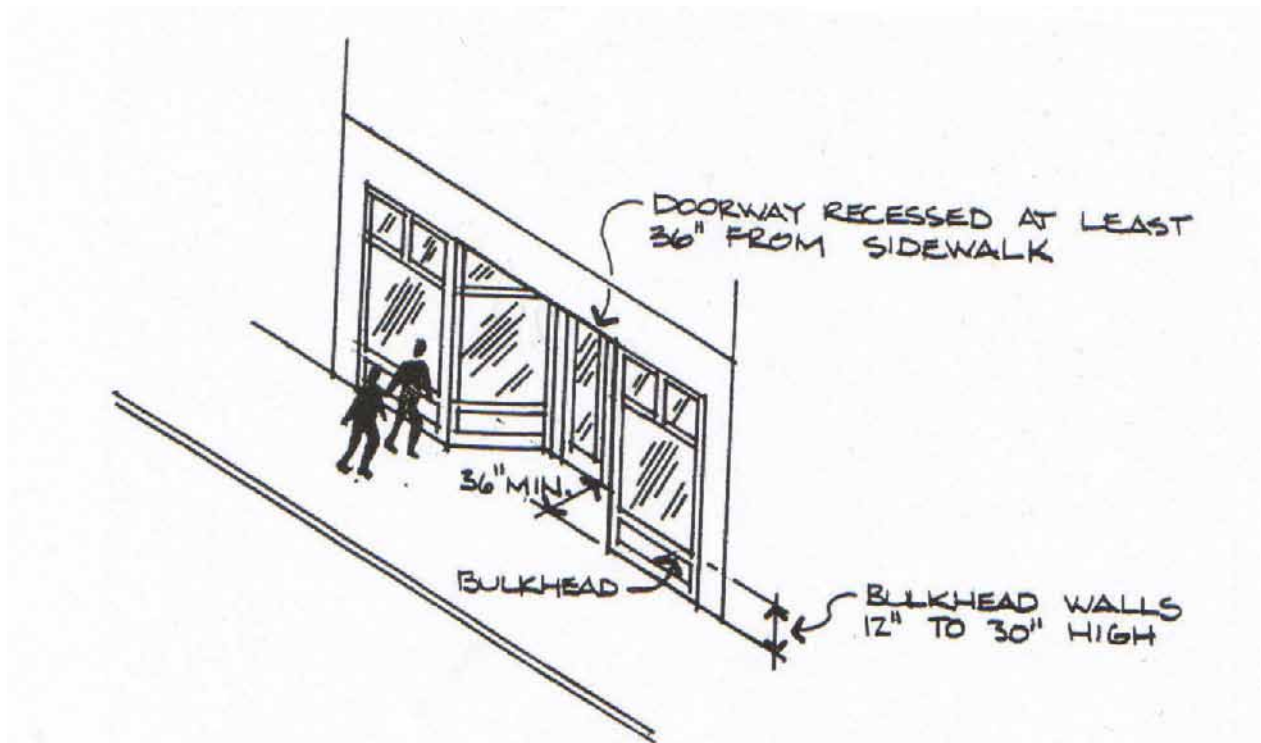


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#### *Guideline 7: First Floor Facades*

- Existing historic storefront elements such as cast iron pillars, bulkheads, original display windows, transoms, doors, and wall sign fascias should be preserved. New storefront designs and renovations are encouraged to incorporate and respect those elements.
- Historic landmark and transitional residential buildings should retain their traditional patterns of fenestration on the ground floor.
- First floor street facades of theme and anomaly buildings should have at least half their surface area in clear, non-mirrored, non-opaque glass. Bulkhead base walls should be built below first floor glass and should not rise less than 12" above outside grade, nor more than 30".
- Theme or anomaly street facades should have at least one doorway every 40', recessed at least 36" from the sidewalk.
- Replication of a storefront which is as historically authentic as possible to its building is encouraged, but not required.
- Exterior security bars or shutters on storefronts should be avoided where possible. Installation of any security measures should not damage historic materials or features.





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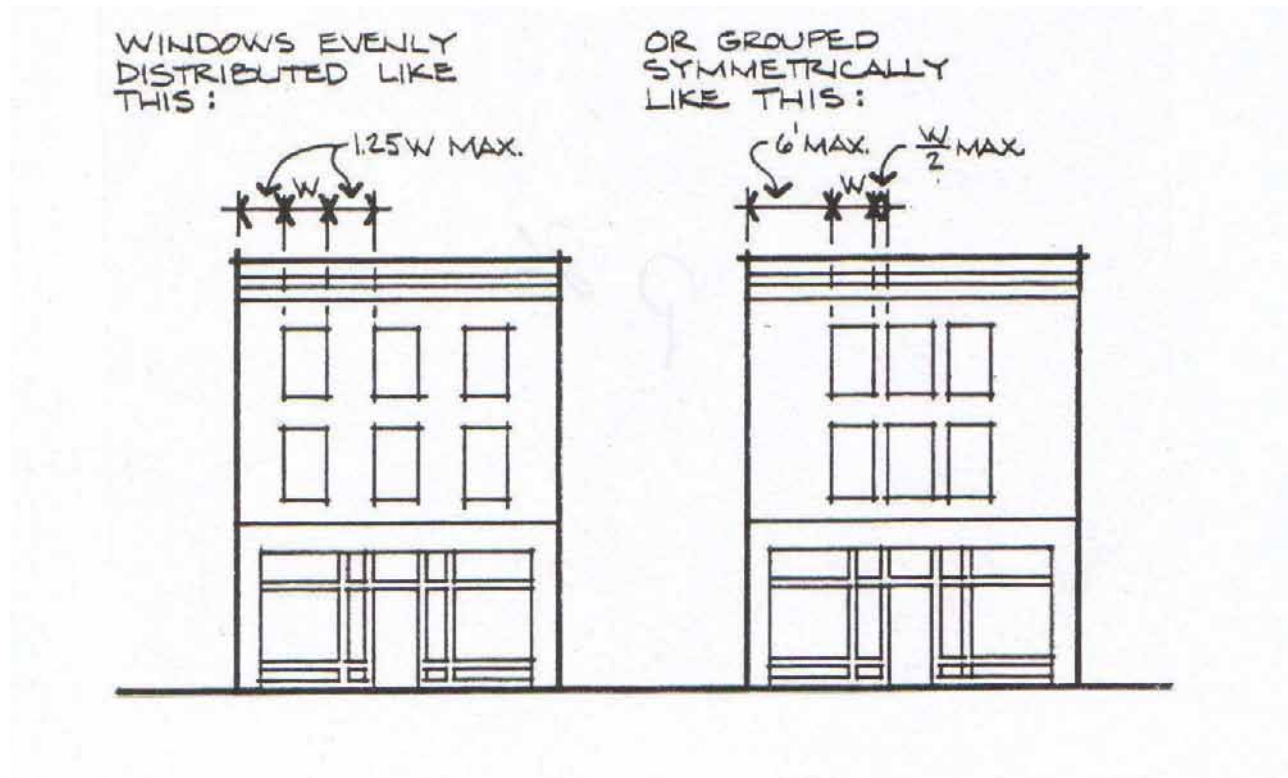


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*Guideline 8: Upper Floor Window Arrangements for Theme Building Street Facades*

- Historic window arrangements, including lintels, sills, and masonry surrounds, should be preserved when present.
- Windows for new theme buildings should be organized so as to create rhythmic, symmetrical patterns. Windows should be aligned vertically and horizontally.
- On new theme building facades, windows should cover a minimum of 20% and a maximum of 40% of the facade area above the first floor (coverage based on window outer frame size).
- New window header heights should align horizontally with those on at least one adjacent building where feasible.
- On new theme building facades, windows should be evenly spaced in the horizontal direction, with no more than 1.25 window frame widths between windows or from windows to building corners. Exceptions may be made if windows are arranged in groups.
- New horizontal window groups should form rhythmic, symmetrical patterns on the building. Within groups, there should be a wall space between window frames of not more than 1/2 window width. Such wall spaces shall be of masonry materials the same as or compatible with other facade materials. Wall spaces between or next to new window groups should be no more than 6' wide.



- New windows may be symmetrically ganged without intervening masonry wall spaces if the total width of a set of ganged windows is not more than 6'.
- If sets of ganged windows are evenly spaced on the facade, the distance between them should be no more than 1.25 times the width of an individual window in the gang. Exceptions may be made if ganged windows are arranged in groups.
- New ganged windows may be grouped if there are wall spaces between ganged groups of not more than 1/2 the width of an individual window in the gang. The distance between window gangs or between a ganged window group and the vertical edge of the facade should be no more than 6'.



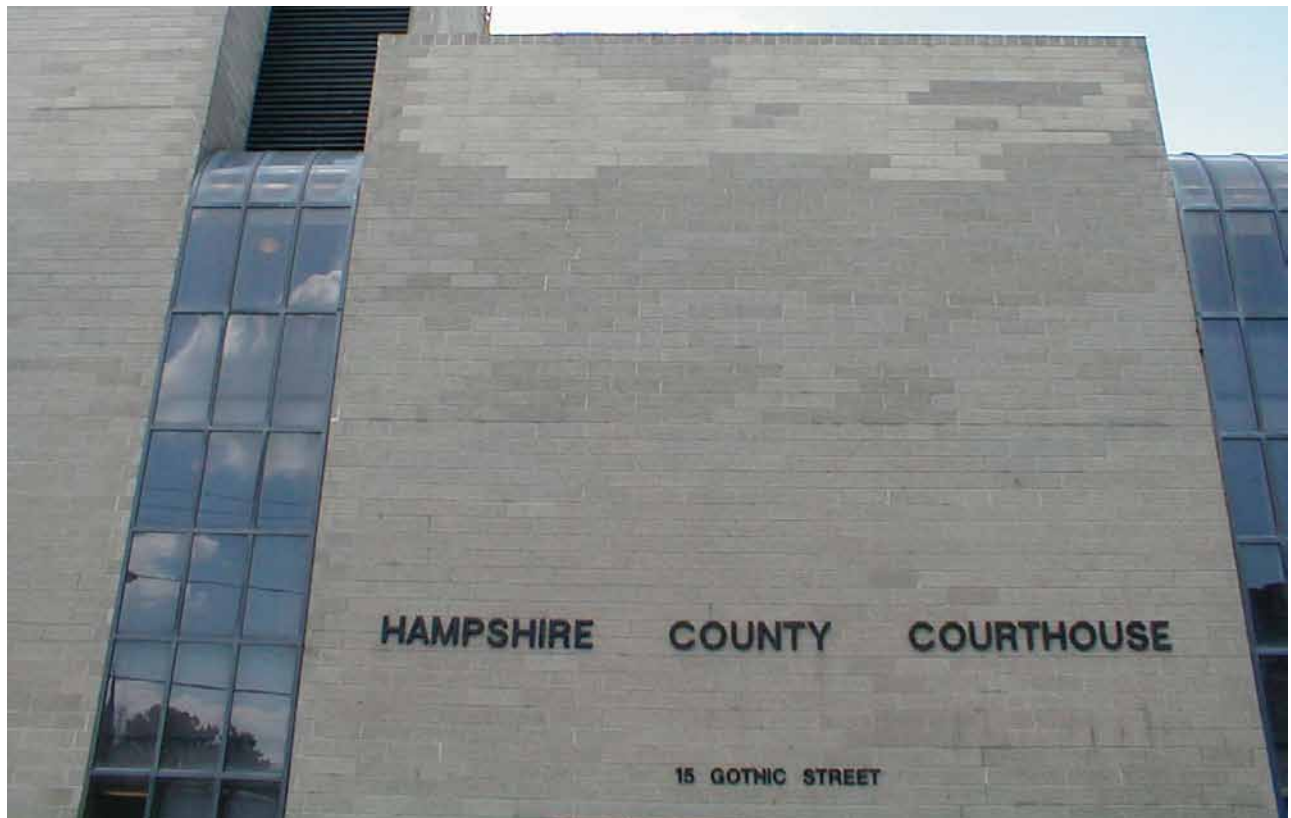
- New window bays may be used if they are designed and applied in a historically appropriate manner, are arranged symmetrically or centrally on the building, and are not individually wider than 1/3 of the overall facade width. Spacing of window bays should follow the preceding two guidelines for ganged windows.



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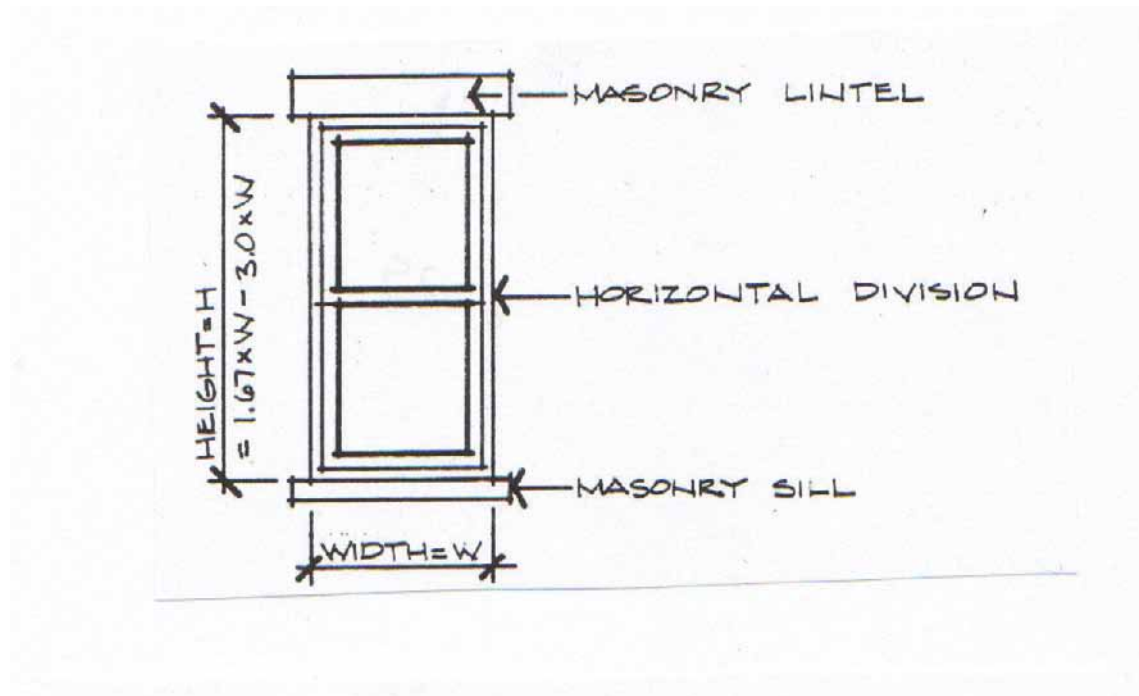
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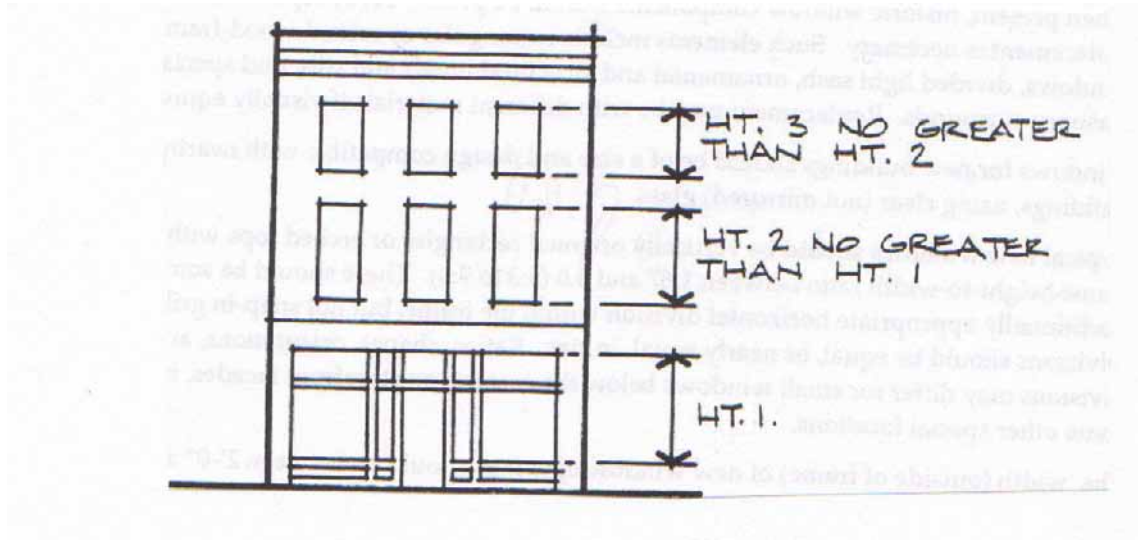


*Guideline 9: Upper Floor Window Size & Design for Theme Building Street Facades*

- When present, historic window components should be preserved, or replicated if replacement is necessary. Such elements include rectangular or arched wood-framed windows, divided light sash, ornamental and structural lintels and sills, and special masonry surrounds. Replacement may be with different materials if visually equivalent.
- Windows for new buildings should be of a size and design compatible with nearby buildings, using clear (not mirrored) glass.
- Typical new windows should be vertically oriented rectangles or arched tops with a frame height-to-width ratio between 1.67 and 3.0 (5:3 to 9:3). There should be some traditionally appropriate horizontal division within the frame, but not snap-in grilles. Divisions should be equal, or nearly equal, in size. Ratios, shapes, orientations, and divisions may differ for small windows below the cornice, on storefront facades, and in some other special locations.
- The width (outside of frame) of new window openings should be between 2'-0" and 3'-0".
- New windows should have visible, historically compatible masonry sills and lintels (or masonry arched tops). Sills or lintels may consist of decorative brick accents in brick facades, with vertical orientation or color.



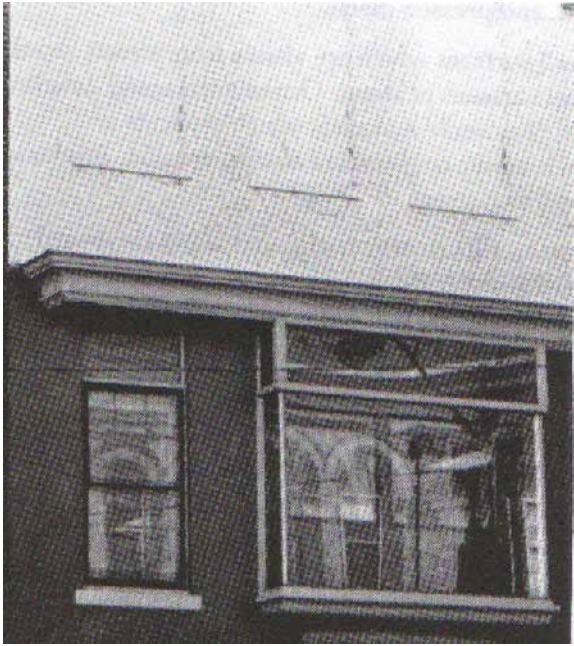
- New window openings on a given floor should be no taller or wider than those on the floor below.



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#### *Guideline 10: Facade Materials*

- Historic building materials should be preserved when present. Such materials include wood, stone, brick, cast stone, cast iron, and pressed metal.
- For theme and landmark buildings, wall surfaces which are visible from streets should be predominantly brick and/or traditional varieties of stone. Ornamental metal detailing may be used if historically appropriate. Facsimile materials which replicate an appropriate historic appearance of brick, stone, or metal are also acceptable. Stucco is an acceptable surface for walls not fronting on a street.
- For transitional residential construction on side streets, traditional wood clapboard siding and wood trim should be used. These buildings may incorporate other building materials which are historically compatible with wood clapboards. Vinyl siding is inappropriate. When siding is applied, it should leave all existing trim and structural features, such as brackets, corner boards, hoods, etc., undisturbed and visible.
- Mortar joints for new masonry construction should be no more than 3/8" thick for brick, or 1/2" thick for other masonry elements if they are at least 8" high x 16" wide. Mortar color should not significantly contrast with the masonry in hue or darkness.
- Windows for new transitional residential construction should be consistent in appearance with those of historic residential buildings in the neighborhood.
- For all construction, materials should be combined in historically appropriate combinations.
- Materials which are to be painted, such as previously painted facade materials and window frames, should be repainted in colors which complement the materials of surrounding historic buildings.
- Unpainted facade materials on historic masonry buildings should be painted only after careful consideration.



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*Guideline 11: Cornices on Theme Buildings*

- Historic cornices of corbeled brick, pressed metal, or wood should be preserved when present.
- Decorative cornices at least 2' high should be built on the street facades of new theme buildings, and should reflect the detailed, pendant-like patterns or other rich patterning apparent in adjacent and nearby historic buildings. Such cornices should be corbeled or otherwise in horizontal relief to the street.

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### *Guideline 12: Facade Detailing*

- Historic facade details should be preserved when present. Such details may include quoins, brackets, decorative brickwork, incised ornament, carved columns, etc.
- New construction should respond to the small scale detailing of surrounding historic buildings by displaying stylistically consistent, compatible detailing on street facades.
- "Trademark" building details (conspicuous "signature" architectural elements other than signs which are unique to a particular franchise business) are not consistent with the historic character of downtown Northampton.

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### *Guideline 13: Mechanical Equipment*

- For historic buildings, fire escapes, window-mounted air conditioners, or other mechanical features should not be installed in ways which irreversibly damage historic features or materials. On masonry buildings, mounting hardware should be attached to mortar joints rather than to the masonry itself.
- Rooftop mechanical equipment should not be visible from street views.
- Where feasible, fire escapes, window-mounted air conditioners, or other mechanical features should not be located on facades which front major streets.

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*Guideline 14: Drive-Through Commercial Services*

- Stand-alone drive-through commercial services are incompatible with the historic character, pedestrian activity, and restricted traffic patterns of the downtown district, and should therefore not be located so as to be visible or accessible from downtown streets.
- If access can be provided for a drive-through by means other than a downtown street, then a stand-alone drive-through may be located in the district, but should only be located so as not to be visible from downtown streets.

*Guideline 15: Signs Located Above the First Floor*

- Historic sign fascia bands above first floor storefronts should be preserved when present.
- Northampton's Zoning Ordinance provides regulations on sign quantity, size, and placement. Those regulations normally limit signs in the CB district to one main wall or awning sign per facade per establishment. These regulations are compatible with the downtown district's character.
- New business signs should normally be placed in the flat fascia band above first floor glazing, or should be contained within a fabric (not rigid) awning. Signs should not be placed so as to obscure special historic features or detailing.
- Signs should be mounted so as to avoid irreversibly damaging historic building features or materials. Mounting hardware for masonry buildings should be attached to mortar joints rather than to the masonry itself.

## **V. Appendices**

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## *I Downtown Northampton: Character-Defining Features*

In order to determine whether historic regulations should be developed for the downtown district, and if so, which features were significant, the Northampton Historic District Study Committee analyzed the Downtown District and composed the following list of features they considered character-defining. Their observations have been incorporated and used as the aesthetic foundation for the design review guidelines.

The full text of this 1998 document follows:

*The rich mixture of commercial, institutional and religious buildings is enhanced by prestige residential areas that developed along major entry corridors. The architectural fabric and the history of Northampton are inseparable. A wide range of architectural styles compose the fabric of the streetscape. It is this eclectic mix of buildings of distinction that justified the architectural importance of the district (1991 Historic District Study Committee Report). The district is the heart of Northampton and is the center of institutional and commercial activity in the city.*

The best of the character defining features that should be maintained in all existing buildings and in all new construction in Downtown Northampton include:

1. **An irregular shaped downtown street pattern.** Following the natural topography of the area, Main Street's curved shape creates a sense of the intimate town center. At every turn vistas are framed by the irregularity of this street and those that lead off it, resulting in something like a large outdoor room defined through the shapes of varying scale and material.
2. **A downtown that is the embodiment of the transition of an early 19th century New England village to a busy late 19th century commercial center.** It is primarily made up of an eclectic collection of well-designed historic buildings from the 19th and 20th centuries that complement an outstanding collection of landmark buildings and each other. Although the Victorian era dominates, many other styles and periods are represented.
3. **Buildings are primarily of masonry construction (especially brick) on Main Street and upper Pleasant Street and masonry and wood-frame construction on side streets.** Buildings incorporate exterior building materials to complement the brick, granite and masonry facades of historic buildings in the core downtown. In the fringe areas of the district, where traditional wood frame buildings with wood clapboard siding predominates, buildings may incorporate exterior building materials that are compatible with wood frame facades.
4. **Buildings respect and are compatible with older buildings and the detail and historic character of downtown.** They do not necessarily match other buildings in style or materials. Materials are used, however, in an appropriate scale for the particular material, appear to be used in the way in which they would have been used historically and structurally, and respect the pre-existing materials of surrounding buildings.
5. **Rich and consistent detailing on buildings, including trim, cornices, lintels, materials, corners, and ornamentation.** These details divide the basic material of the building and provide texture on the building facades. Lintels (decorative or structural) and cornices are especially important, with cornices in relief from the building.

6. **Hierarchy of small design elements within the whole building.** These are generally organized with the largest elements at the bottom of the building and smaller elements as the building rises vertically.
7. **Buildings have a balanced vertical and horizontal rhythm to their design.** Larger buildings have a horizontal grouping which helps to organize and break up the building.
8. **Windows are vertically oriented and in a size and design compatible with other buildings.** Windows use clear or opaque (not mirrored) glass. Windows are organized on the building. Windows cover a minimum of 15% and maximum of 40% of the wall area above the first floor. Windows are vertically oriented in a ratio between 3:5 (1:1.16) and 3:9 (1:3) width to height. Ratios and orientations may differ for small decorative windows below the roof and in some other limited locations and storefront facades. Except for small decorative windows and first floor storefronts, windows have some horizontal division within the glass and a decorative or structural lintel/sill on the top and bottom of the window. Except between groups of windows, when windows are grouped, there is a spacing of less than one window width horizontally between windows.
9. **Construction design, building alignment, setback, height, and articulation are consistent or compatible with traditional patterns of surrounding buildings.** Generally there is no front setback, except when necessary to preserve high quality views of landmark buildings or to create special opportunities for quality public spaces.
10. **Appropriate scale of buildings.** Buildings are designed to not overwhelm their neighbors. Typically building massing is limited to be compatible with neighboring buildings, but often appropriate scale is maintained by providing special detail to design elements to keep large buildings from overpowering smaller buildings.
11. **The first floor facades of commercial buildings have glass storefronts with views inside the buildings, except for historic masonry landmark buildings where such facades would be inconsistent with the design of these buildings.** The first floors of these commercial buildings generally have a minimum of 50% clear, non-mirrored and non-opaque glass.
12. **Masonry first floor facades of historic masonry landmark buildings.**
13. **Preservation of all historic buildings (defined herein as built prior to 1945).** Historical buildings are not demolished nor are historical features destroyed until they are carefully analyzed to ensure there are no practical alternatives. Functionally obsolete or otherwise inadequate buildings are carefully analyzed to ensure they cannot be adaptively reused and are aggressively marketed before demolition of buildings or historical features is considered. The design of a new building is approved before a safe existing historical building is demolished.

## II Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Originally published in 1977 and revised in 1990, the *Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*, established by the Secretary of the Interior, represent our country's first principles of historic preservation. They were considered in drafting Northampton's downtown district design guidelines. The *Standards*, summarized below, were drawn up by the Federal Government with an eye to balancing the protection of a building's historic features with consideration for its economic viability and efficient contemporary use. They are included for those who want to know more about national standards for historic preservation, and for building owners who elect to rehabilitate their historic building in a manner qualifying for Federal investment tax credits. Their inclusion here is not intended to serve any regulatory function in Northampton's downtown district. Complete texts of the *Standards* are available at Northampton's Office of Planning and Development and are discussed on the internet at [www2.cr.nps.gov/tps](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps). A general outline of the *Standards* follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.



### III Commonwealth of Massachusetts MGL Chapter 40C

MGL chapter 40C, referred to as the Historic Districts Act, promotes the preservation and protection of historically significant buildings and places within defined historic districts. Such districts are overseen by a local Historic District Commission, whose main responsibilities are outlined in 40C:7, below:

#### **40C:7 Factors to be considered by commission.**

Section 7. In passing upon matters before it the commission shall consider among other things, this historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features of buildings and structures in the surrounding area. In the case of new construction or additions to existing buildings or structures the commission shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure both in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and the buildings and structures in the vicinity, and the commission may in appropriate cases impose dimensional and ordinance or by-law. When ruling on applications for certificates of appropriateness for solar energy systems, as defined in section one A of chapter forty A, the commission shall also consider the policy of the commonwealth to encourage the use of solar energy systems and to protect solar access. The commission shall not consider interior arrangements or architectural features not subject to public view.

The commission shall not make any recommendation or requirement except for the purpose of preventing developments incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and the historic district.